

FBI Laboratory Practices for Blind Verification

1 Purpose

Blind verification (BV) is an examination of an item(s) of evidence by another examiner qualified and authorized in the same category of testing who does not know the conclusion of the original examiner. BV tests the reproducibility of conclusions in an environment that minimizes bias.

2 Scope

These practices apply to all FBI Laboratory personnel who are involved in conducting examinations in the following categories of testing:

- Hair
- Firearms
- Toolmarks
- Document Examination
- Impression Evidence (footwear/tires)
- Latent Print Comparisons

3 Practices

3.1 Each unit, discipline, and/or category of testing that conducts the examinations in the categories of testing specified in Section 2 will have procedures for BV in a level 2 document. A BV procedure will:

- Define what examination types are subject to BV.
- Ensure any examiner(s) who is consulted by the original examiner during the examination process does not perform the BV.
- Require a record of the BV and any resulting consultations.
- Ensure a range of conclusions are blind verified annually.
- Direct examiners to the Laboratory Operations Manual (LOM) - Practices for Resolution of Scientific or Technical Disagreement to resolve differences of opinion on a BV.

3.2 A Unit Chief will ensure a record of the BVs performed is maintained. A Unit Chief will additionally ensure the number of BVs is evaluated and recorded on an annual basis to ascertain that a range of conclusions are conducted in the applicable examination types.

3.3 A BV will be assigned and completed in a timely manner.

4 Records

The following records will be generated as a result of these practices and retained through one accreditation cycle, unless otherwise specified:

- Record of a BV and any resulting consultations and/or resolution of any disagreement, as examination records in the FBI Laboratory file.
- Record of the number of BVs performed, including the FBI Laboratory number, the category of testing, the type of BV (e.g., association, non-association) and any noted differences of opinions between the original examiner and the blind verifier.

5 References

FBI Laboratory Quality Assurance Manual, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division, latest revision.

FBI Laboratory Operations Manual, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Laboratory Division, latest revision.

ISO/IEC 17025 - General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories, International Organization for Standardization, Geneva, Switzerland, 2017.

ISO/IEC 17025:2017 - Forensic Science Testing and Calibration Laboratories Accreditation Requirements (AR 3125), ANAB, Milwaukee, WI, April 29, 2019.

Rev. #	Issue Date	History
6	06/03/19	Removed the term “independent” from section 1 to allow for consultations. In section 2, removed statement that these practices do not apply to a category of testing with fewer than three examiners, as all categories listed meet the criterion. Updated section 4 so that records of BVs are by category of testing. Updated list of references in section 5.
7	12/21/20	Minor edits throughout for clarity. 3.1 and 3.2 - updated to range of conclusions from representative number of associations and non-associations 4 - removed five years 5 – added LOM

Approval

Redacted - Signatures on File

Laboratory Director

Date: 12/18/2020

Quality Manager

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